



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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Vol. 23, No. 19
September 18, 2009

by

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OVERVIEW

Now that the unofficial end of summer is behind us, we are looking forward to the fall bounty in Virginia's waters. Unfortunately, the blustery conditions are keeping many anglers off the water! Recently, the spot run has really picked up, especially at local piers. Croaker, bluefish, and speckled trout are around, and offshore, the marlin bite continues. Offshore trips are also coming in with reports of tuna, dolphin, and sailfish.

Due to the staff commitments with the State Fair of Virginia and the Virginia Standards of Learning tour (September 24 through October 4), staff will not publish the Virginia Saltwater Review again until October 9, 2009.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna, at Captain Bob's Marina, reports a few flounder catches this week despite the windy conditions. Over the past few weeks, anglers have found red drum off the surf and nice-sized flounder around the Subway Cars and around Queen's Sound. Croaker were also around before the poor weather hit.

Onancock

Croaker and spot are available out of Onancock, according to Captain Wil. Small bluefish are around, and nice-sized speckled trout (9.5 pounds) were reported in the area. Captain Wil believes that fishing in the area is showing signs of improvement.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, white and blue marlin with a few dolphin were reported when the wind wasn't blowing. Most of the action has been in the Washington Canyon.

Staff at Captain Zed's Marina reports that offshore anglers have been catching bluefin tuna, dolphin, and numerous white marlin over the past few weeks.

Cape Charles

Staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle report that fishing has slowed a bit in recent weeks. Flounder and sea mullet were reported near the concrete ships and around the bay, speckled trout was reported near Oyster, and red drum are beginning to show up throughout the area. Croaker action has slowed lately.

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone, reported decent flounder fishing this week with several keepers up to 22 inches. Over the weekend, flounder were around as well, but there was a high throw-back ratio.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Nice spadefish were reported from the 4th island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, according to staff at Cobb's Marina. While the cobia action has slowed, there are still croaker, spot, and flounder biting in the area.

Staff at the Sunset Boating Center reports that flounder have been coming in from the Hampton Bar and the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spot have been caught at the Hampton Roads and Monitor Merrimac bridge tunnels. Last week, a release citation for a 51-inch red drum was also reported.

At Salt Pond's Marina, anglers were reporting citation tilefish last week. Two were reported (11 pounds, 3 ounces, and 10 pound, 13 ounces) on the 13th. Both were landed from the Norfolk Canyon. Inshore, spot fishing has picked up, and they are getting bigger. Flounder and cobia fishing has been slow.

At the York River Fishing Center, anglers reported catches of small speckled trout and puppy drum over grassy areas. Anglers are still fishing for cobia at the York Spit, and croaker and spot are being landed at the Gloucester Pier.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

Cobia continue to put on a good showing. The York Spit remains a good area to chum up some fish. These fish should be leaving us soon, so keep a lookout for pods of fish leaving the mouth of the bay and gathering along the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Flounder fishing has been pretty good when weather conditions have allowed. Back River Reef and the Baltimore Channel have been good flounder locations. The spot bite is on, and they are being caught in the York, Poquoson, and James Rivers and inside of Rudee and Lynnhaven inlets. The Hampton Bar and the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel have been hot spot spots. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are up on the flats and inside of the inlets. Large red drum are being caught around the shoals at the mouth of the bay. They are also being caught at York Spit by the cobia fleet and along the Baltimore Channel by

flounder fishermen. Speckled trout are available on Poquoson Flats, and the Back River is producing some nice fish. False albacore can be found along the oceanfront chasing schools of menhaden. A few amberjack and crevalle jack have been caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, but that has been very unpredictable. There are still plenty of amberjack at the South Tower. Offshore fishing has been great, and white marlin fishing has been exceptional. A lot of wahoo are being caught. Plenty of dolphin are around, and more yellowfin tuna are showing in the catches. Even the occasional bigeye tuna is crashing the party. The only thing slowing up the offshore bite is the wind. Calm days have been at a premium.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Fall fishing is good when anglers can get out on the water, but intermittent blustery conditions are making it difficult. When the weather allows, most anglers are either targeting cobia and flounder or heading offshore for the escalating billfish bite.

Inshore, big cobia are lingering on the pilings of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the buoys near the mouth of the bay. Large schools of cobia are also cruising on the surface as they gather to exit the area. Look for these fish staging along the oceanfront before they begin their journey south. Many cobia are exceeding 50 pounds, with tossed jigs and live bait doing the trick.

The flounder took another breather this week, but the action should heat back up when the waters clear. With winds predicted from the Northeast this week, anglers can drift for flatfish along the protected bayside Eastern Shore area with little effort. Mark at Chris' Bait and Tackle reports that folks are finding a few keepers, with some fish pushing to over 9 pounds while drifting off Kiptopeke. The offshore wreck flounder scene also slowed up recently, but plenty of keeper sea bass and hungry trigger fish will oblige.

The red drum species thrives in turbulent, dirty water. Churned water paired with a northeasterly breeze can produce a blitz of red drum activity. The drum bite on the Eastern Shore shoals and in the surf along Fisherman's Island is back on the rise. And with that said, the long awaited red drum run off the Little Island Fishing Pier could also happen this week.

Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are also on the loose within the shallows, inlets and creeks, as well as the surf off Dam Neck, Sandbridge, and the Eastern Shore Barrier islands. Anywhere within Lynnhaven River is a great place for pups right now. The folks at Long Bay Pointe Bait and Tackle report that juvenile reds are favoring cut mullet.

Although no one is talking about it, escalating speckled trout catches are beginning to draw a quiet crowd. Good numbers of fish are coming from most of the usual haunts such as Hungar's Creek, the Poquoson Flats, and Mobjack Bay. Look for this trend to continue to heat up over the next month.

Decent sized spot are pouring into the lower bay and oceanfront areas. The Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports that anglers are especially thrilled with the recent spot invasion inside Rudee Inlet. Folks are crowding along the jetties and bulkheads to get in on the two-at-a-time action, with bloodworms the bait of choice. Lynnhaven Inlet should also begin producing soon, but the spot

action is nil for now. Ocean's East 2 reports that the local piers are also great places to get in on the hot spot bite right now, with the nighttime hours the best lately. Horse croaker are still lurking around the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, especially along the deeper channels.

Spanish mackerel are chasing trolled spoons along Sandbridge and Dam Neck in about 20 to 25 feet of water. Schools of false albacore in these same areas will also hit spoons. King mackerel have been scarce so far this year, but smaller kings are hitting occasional trolled bait or lure along the CB line, inshore wrecks, and out to the Chesapeake Light Tower. The king showing should improve into October.

Amberjack are still available on local wrecks, the Chesapeake Light Tower, and will remain on the southern towers through October. Creville jack are also a possibility, but this action is hit or miss.

The recurring windy weather is also keeping many blue water anglers closer to shore, but the improving billfish bite awaits boats when they can negotiate a decent day. Good numbers of white marlin, with a few blue marlin in the mix, are available from the 400 line to the Triple 0's area. Scattered larger class yellowfin tuna are also surprising a few boats this week. Wahoo will continue to slam spreads for several more weeks, while gaffer dolphin are still a good backup.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, at Jetts' Hardware, reports that Spanish mackerel and bluefish were caught by trollers this week. Reports of spot and croaker have tailed off, but that may be a function of people not targeting those species last week.

Dan, at Smith's Point Marina, reports there are plenty of striped bass on the Maryland side of the line and off of the jetties. It looks like the stripers will be waiting for the anglers here in Virginia when the season opens October 4th. A lot of small bluefish are being caught, but the Spanish mackerel numbers have been on the decline. The cooler weather may be pushing them further south. Maryland has closed their recreational flounder season, so reports on flounder catches have dropped off. Small spot and croaker are still biting and hopefully those spot will be growing larger over the next few weeks.

Butch, with Garret's Marina, reports the fishing in the upper parts of the Rappahannock has been slow, but there are reports of spot at the mouth of the river and around Gwynn's Island.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Cobia continue to bite at the York Spit and near New Point Light, and menhaden chum combined with live croaker or eels or whole menhaden are the baits of choice. The creeks and rivers continue to produce keeper spot and a few croaker. Large spot are available on the front side and back side of Gwynn's Island, at Butlers Hole, and at the Spike (3R). This week, we registered our first spot citation (a release) in 3 years. Small grey trout continue to bite in the Piankatank, but there are few keepers. Speckled trout are biting in the Piankatank, along with puppy drum, particularly around any grassy areas.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach fishing Center report numerous spot in Rudee Inlet, as well as flounder, puppy drum, and speckled trout. Inshore, bluefish, cobia, and Spanish mackerel were reported as well as some sharks. Offshore, anglers were catching numerous yellowfin tuna and dolphin. They also reported good action with white marlin, sailfish, and amberjack.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, nice spot and croaker were reported, and there are many anglers out looking for puppy drum (juvenile red drum).

Nice puppy drum were reported from the Lynnhaven Pier, along with numerous spot, croaker, and bluefish.

At the Virginia Beach Pier, anglers landed abundant spot, croaker, sea mullet, and the occasional puppy drum.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier, in Sandbridge, anglers reported pompano, bluefish, and spot, but no puppy drum have been pulled in yet.

Grey trout, spot, sea mullet, and scup were hooked at the Buckroe Fishing Pier this week. Flounder were also reported from the surrounding area.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Nags Head was slow due to wind and waves. Anglers had some success when they were able to access the Gulf Stream, with nice catches of wahoo, dolphin, amberjack, Atlantic bonito, little tunny, along with yellowfin, blackfin, and skipjack tuna. Billfish catches have slowed, but anglers are still catching sailfish and both white and blue marlin on a fairly consistent basis. Mid-range anglers saw one extreme or the other, with some days yielding very little and others producing limits of very large king mackerel with a few red drum and striped bass mixed in. Artificial reefs provided consistent catches of tautog, triggerfish, spadefish, black drum, and sheepshead. Nearshore anglers had little success, with very little to report except a few catches of bluefish and Spanish mackerel. Anglers from the shore and piers had results similar to the nearshore boaters with very little to report. Previously high volume catches of large spot and croaker dropped off. Other species caught in small numbers included weakfish, spotted seatrout, flounder, pigfish, pinfish, black sea bass, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, sheepshead, spadefish, black and red drum, puffers, skates, and assorted rays and sharks. People fishing in the sound experienced a modest improvement, with flounder and spotted sea trout being the primary target. Flounder were most abundant at Oregon Inlet, and the bulk of the catches were caught near the shallow areas close to the islands and land masses. Spotted seatrout catches were recorded throughout the area, with most anglers reporting early mid-morning yielding the bulk of the catches. Bridge structures throughout the area continue to offer nice catches of sheepshead and black drum when little else is available.

South of Oregon Inlet, large red drum are being caught at the point. The bluefish numbers have been reaching what some people would classify as a blitz in the area near Ramp 43. Sea mullet and spot were

being caught around the motels.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras was good as soon as the wind died down. Wahoo were the species of the day with dolphin, king mackerel, and tuna a little more scattered this week. Sailfish were around for those chasing billfish. Inside the inlet, large red drum were being caught with good regularity.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.











ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPER, WARSAW GROUPER	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting



Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008

Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and

type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!



VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague



***DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia**

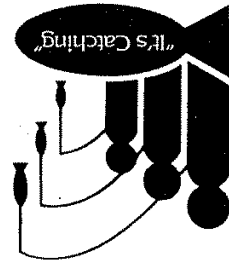
The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water